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Hügel; Vol. XI. of Reports of Explorations and Surveys for Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean; Map of the Rio Colorado of the West; Beriah Botfield's Shropshire; Lawson's British and Native Cochín; Continuation of the Ordnance Map of Lanarkshire, &c. &c.

EXHIBITIONS.—Numerous Japanese Works, Maps, and Atlases, including Japanese Dictionary, Books of Buddhist Charm, Themes and Odes, Geography, Description of European Instruments and Machinery, Hobson's Natural Philosophy, Comparative Anatomy, Surgery, &c., were exhibited by Mr. A. Wylie, the Missionary; also several Coins by Mr. Hodgson.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.—The Chairman announced that, in order to illustrate the Memoir of M. Du Chaillu on Equatorial Africa; recently read before the Society, the large room in the house of the Society would be used, for a few weeks after Easter, to exhibit his specimens, with maps and drawings. The Fellows, on application, would have tickets placed at their disposal; and a certain number would also be sent to the councils of various scientific bodies in London. Also that the Council had granted to the Royal Institution the loan of maps and drawings illustrative of the region of M. Du Chaillu's explorations for his intended lecture on Monday, the 18th inst.

The Papers read were—

1. *Account of Four Excursions in the Japanese island of Yesso.* By PEMBERTON HODGSON, H.M.'s Consul at Hakodadi.

MR. HODGSON describes four journeys which he made from Hakodadi. They were of from four to six days' duration: two of them were into the interior, and two along the coast. He rode unarmed with a party of ladies, attended by thirty or forty servants, and did not experience the slightest obstruction. He found the island to be uninhabited and almost unknown to the Japanese in the interior, though supporting a large population of fishermen along its coast. The aborigines, who are unkempt and demi-savage, and are despised by the Japanese, number about 80,000. Large quantities of fish and edible seaweed are collected on the coast and exported to China. In one part Mr. Hodgson mentions villages every few hundred yards, where the natives mow the abundant seaweed off the rocks. They live on this, on fish, and on rice. Five miles from the line of coast there remains hardly any sign of habitation. The interior of the island is mountainous on a small scale, and beautifully wooded. Its vegetation is exceedingly various and ornate, including chestnut, oak, beech, pine, silver-birch, sycamore, magnolia, and catalpa among

the larger trees, together with an undergrowth of remarkable richness. Two active volcanoes were ascended by the party; a medico-botanical garden was visited, where students were busily engaged; also a lead-mine and some iron-works: a few indications of gold were found. The botanical collections that were made have been sent to Kew. Mr. Hodgson speaks admiringly of the perfect courtesy and hospitality he experienced throughout his short journeys.

THE CHAIRMAN returned his hearty thanks to the gentlemen who had forwarded to the Society the interesting document which had just been read. He might truly say that this communication was one of the many proofs of the usefulness of the Royal Geographical Society; for Mr. Hodgson's paper might have been tied up in red tape and never have been known if the Geographical Society had not existed. It was to the public interest that such papers should come from the Secretary of State, being of real use to the country in pointing out new channels of commerce, and he considered that the Society in discussing and publishing them became an important auxiliary to the State. On that occasion they had not many gentlemen present who had visited Japan. He regretted that they had not with them Captain Osborn, but fortunately they had present the gentleman who was recently appointed her Majesty's Secretary of Legation, and who would have to proceed immediately to Japan, that well-known traveller whose works were descriptive of the geographical and physical features and the political condition of many parts of the world as well as of China and Japan. He alluded to Mr. Oliphant, and, as he was about to proceed to those regions, he (the chairman) wished to impress upon him that when he sent his dispatches to Lord John Russell this Society would receive any portion of them with delight.

MR. OLIPHANT thanking the meeting for the kind manner in which they had received his name, expressed his determination to send home to the Geographical Society, through her Majesty's Government, any information which he might collect; and said he hoped he should be able to push his explorations far into Japan. They might not be aware that by the conditions of the treaty, the right of travelling into the interior was confined to the members of the mission at Jeddo, so that he and his colleagues would have a monopoly of explorations into this most interesting country. When he was there before, the limited opportunities which he had for observation were confined entirely to Nagasaki and Jeddo; therefore, he knew very little of the island upon which the paper treated. He was sure, however, that that island was extremely important in a geographical point of view. It was a remarkable circumstance that the Japanese themselves hardly seemed to have known of its existence so recently as the beginning of the seventeenth century, for in the treaty negotiated between King James I. and the Emperor of Japan in 1613, the last clause stipulated that the English should have the right to go and *discover* the island of Yesso. It showed at any rate that in those days the Japanese were not afraid of us, and that the island of Yesso was a *terra incognita*. They trusted us then, and he hoped they would trust us still, and allow us to develop the natural resources of that island without interference. He should be glad to hear from Mr. Hodgson what the articles of trade were which Yesso produced for foreign merchants. It was to Yesso that we to a great extent owed our treaty, because the Americans who first opened Japan did so from the necessity which had arisen to induce the Japanese Government to relax their laws with reference to the crews of ships which might be wrecked upon their coasts. In the summer of 1850, there were no less than 800 American whalers in the seas in the immediate neighbourhood of the island of Yesso,

and wrecks were constantly taking place. It, therefore, became very important for the American Government to make arrangements with the Japanese Government that the crews of wrecked ships should be protected; and the treaty which the Americans made had been followed by our treaty. He thought it was a reflection upon us that we should know so little of that coast, and should only have one surveying ship out there. The fact mentioned by Mr. Hodgson, that he went through the country totally unarmed, was worthy of notice, because the later accounts we had received of Japan rather contradicted the impression which he (Mr. Oliphant) had conveyed in his book, and which he certainly obtained while he was there, of the favourable disposition of the Japanese towards Europeans and the kindheartedness of the people themselves. He believed he should have no reason to change his opinion when he went there again. It was very natural that in a country where the whole government was conducted on a system of exclusiveness, prejudices should exist, especially on the part of what we in this country should call the extreme Conservative section of the aristocracy, against Europeans. Those who had the task of governing the country felt the difficulties which might be incurred by admitting a new element altogether into the condition of affairs. Their politico-economical system had been regulated upon the hypothesis that Japan was excluded from the rest of the world. Sumptuary laws existed, defining exactly what each class should wear, and very often what they should eat. Supply and demand were regulated accordingly: it was quite manifest, therefore, where a new and an uncertain element was introduced, such as the fluctuations of foreign commerce, tending to produce a disturbance of this supply and demand, which at present were exactly proportioned the one to the other—that the ruling classes should become very anxious as to the result and show some reluctance to the carrying out of the treaty. He was quite sure it rested with the English merchants there, so far to conciliate this feeling on the part of the ruling classes as to render the task of conducting our relations with that country every day more easy.

SIR FREDERICK NICHOLSON said that, having visited Hakodadi, he wished to make a few remarks on the paper which had just been read. With reference to the survey of Hakodadi harbour, made by the officers of the United States navy, he must bear his testimony to its great accuracy. He could confirm Mr. Hodgson's statement as to the friendliness both of the people and of the official authorities at that port. They were far less exclusive than those at the southern ports of Japan; and they evinced on all occasions the greatest desire to obtain information respecting European arts, sciences, and customs. Although no opportunity had presented itself to travel as far into the country as Mr. Hodgson had done, he (Sir Frederick) agreed with that gentleman in comparing parts of the country to Switzerland, and he instanced a beautiful valley in the immediate neighbourhood of Hakodadi, where the houses greatly resembled Swiss chalets in their construction. He also alluded to the extreme discipline to which the Japanese people are subjected. With respect to the importance of Hakodadi as a harbour, he considered that the abundance of vegetables, especially of potatoes, which are an excellent antiscorbutic, would render it a valuable place of resort to whalers and other vessels navigating those seas; and, taking into consideration the number of convenient and well-sheltered harbours recently acquired by Russia on the adjoining coast of Chinese Tartary, he was of opinion that Hakodadi might in future times be most useful to us, especially if our trade with Japan were to increase, as there is every prospect of its doing.

MR. PEMBERTON HODGSON considered that Hakodadi was one of the largest ports in Japan. From the opening of the port, June, 1859, to his leaving it in October, 1860, he thought that no fewer than 117 ships had entered it, and amongst them were 57 whalers. The exports consisted chiefly of fish for the Chinese. As to the mineral productions of the country, there was sulphur and

a small quantity of lead. There was also a good deal of tea from the neighbouring isle of Nippon brought there. While he was at Hakodadi several men-of-war visited the place from Russia, though during last year, since the opening of the ice in June, there had been only three Russian vessels of that kind. He had no doubt that some day or other Hakodadi would be a place of great importance. As to the Government of Hakodadi, he had himself found no difficulty. He did not wish to throw unnecessary blame upon his own countrymen, but a great deal of the difficulty which they experienced had to be laid on their own shoulders.

The CHAIRMAN said that there were several Japanese productions which had been sent to the Society by the Rev. Mr. Wylie, who had been a missionary in Japan. If Mr. Wylie was present, he was sure they would be glad to hear any thing from him in reference to that remarkable island.

MR. A. WYLIE said he had no information to communicate to them in reference to the island which had been mentioned that night, as he had never been there; but as he supposed that anything regarding Japan might be interesting, he would mention some things which he had seen and heard in reference to it. While he was there, it was his desire to inquire and gain as much information as he could in regard to the habits of the people, and he mixed with them as much as possible. His impression with regard to the people must, of course, be accepted as merely the result of a short stay in one part of the empire. Comparing the Japanese with the Chinese, his opinion was that they were inferior as a race in a physical point of view, and he believed them to be also mentally inferior to the Chinese. He might be wrong, but he stated what was his impression from a short observation. He believed also that there was much in the Japanese character to which they, as Europeans and Christians, would be averse. He had found much *finesse* among them: in fact, he might say that they were accomplished in the art of deception. Having said so much about the black side of Japan, he thought also that there was a great deal in their favour. They were a very energetic people, and they were very desirous of improving their position; they took every means in their power of advancing their intellectual skill and raising themselves in the scale of civilization. He thought it was important, now that the country had been opened to us, that we should know something about the Japanese character. He was happy to hear from Mr. Oliphant that he proposed to treat with them in a conciliatory manner; for their system of civilization was very different from our own, and if we did not make allowance for their ideas and habits we should inevitably get into trouble. As to the desire of the people to improve themselves, there were in the country very many who were well acquainted with the Dutch language: they had on the table abundant proof of that in the books which they had written. The Dutch were the only people who had been admitted to them for two hundred years; but now the country was about to be opened to Russia, England, and France, and it was found that the people were equally anxious to obtain a knowledge of the languages of those countries. He found that many even of the children were already acquiring a tolerable knowledge of English, and were able to speak English; but it appeared that though they desired to have that knowledge for the sake of commerce, they had also another object in view,—they had an earnest desire to read books published in Europe. Of this we had an evidence in the fact that the Japanese had transferred many of these into their own language unaided. The English were very badly off for works to aid them in acquiring the language of Japan. A vocabulary was published by Dr. Medhurst more than thirty years ago, and the Japanese had got that book and reprinted it entire. It was almost the only work the English had for teaching the Japanese language, and the Japanese used it in their turn for learning the English language. More recently a number of works had been published in China for the purpose of imparting a knowledge of European

science in that country, and many of them had gone to Japan. He might refer to the recent publications of Dr. Hobson in Chinese, which had been largely distributed in Japan. Those surgical and medical works had been reprinted by the Japanese. At present there were several Dutch, imparting to the Japanese a knowledge of the arts and sciences. In Nagasaki the emperor had a large factory, under the superintendence of Mr. Hardes, for the manufacture and repair of steam engines, with an apparatus equal to that of a first-class machine-shop in this country. They had a Dutch officer for two years instructing them in military tactics; and Dr. Pompe van Meerdervoort, a medical man, had been applying himself for a considerable time past to a dissemination of medical knowledge amongst them. The latter gentleman had recently received from the Japanese Government several bodies of culprits for the purpose of teaching anatomy to the native students. These bodies were dissected by the Japanese, under his superintendence, and he said they were making great progress in the study of the science. From the reports of that gentleman and others, he (Mr. Wylie) had been induced to conclude that such an operation had never taken place before; but he was somewhat surprised and interested to find in a native work, a detailed account of a dissection, performed at the capital in 1822, exclusively by Japanese operators, who had obtained their knowledge by means of the study of European anatomical publications. He was led to believe, while in the country, that there were great resources for commerce in Japan which were yet undeveloped. The trade in tea was increasing, and he imagined that after a time, when Europeans became more accustomed to the tea of Japan, it would be considerable. With regard to mineral productions, he believed there was an immense store in Japan of which we had very little knowledge. He was very anxious to ascertain as much as he could as to the religious position of Japan, and he prosecuted his inquiries as far as practicable; in doing so he had the assistance of a gentleman who had lived for some time in the country, and consequently had a knowledge of the inhabitants, their customs, and their views. He found that although the ritual of Confucius was generally adopted in Japan, yet they were not so devoted to it as the Chinese were. Buddhism was much more prevalent, but it differed considerably from that of China; its secular development seeming to have been arrested in Japan at an earlier period of its history. Idolatry was not carried to such an extent; and image-worship was more restricted than in China. There were six different schools of Buddhism in Japan, one of which was of a very singular character: the priests were allowed to eat flesh-meat and to marry, innovations utterly opposed to the spirit of Buddhism in any other country. But besides these there was the Sinto religion, which might be termed par excellence the national creed; the emperor being the high priest. The origin of this system was lost in the mazes of prehistorical antiquity, and offered a remunerative field for the researches of the philosophic archæologist. In its initial period probably much analogy would be found with the early religion of the Chinese, which formed the basis where on had been raised the present conglomerate of absurdities under the name of T'auism. Although they had literally "gods many, and lords many," even amounting to several thousands, yet as far as his observations went, these were chiefly ideal, and the spirit of the system was repugnant to material representations of the deity. It was well known that Christianity had been unconditionally prohibited in the empire for two centuries past; and even at the present day, the jealousy of the Government forbade the discussion of the question by its subjects. There had probably been too much cause for the exclusive policy adopted in former days; but we might hope that in due time the views of the powers that be would be so far modified as to tolerate the practice and profession of the Christian religion in a purer form. For this end much would depend on the character and conduct of our countrymen who profess to follow that faith. There were at present a few American

missionaries there, zealous self-denying men, who were preparing themselves by a knowledge of the language and the people, for any future opening for more direct effort which might occur. They lived among the people, and were closely watched by the Japanese, upon whom a favourable impression would doubtless be effected by observing their simple and blameless style of life. For the first time in history, protestant worship had been established at Nagasaki within the past twelve months, and there was a probability of a church being built at Kanagawa. With the introduction of Christianity into that empire, we might naturally look for the disappearance of much that is at present so repulsive in the national character.

The second Paper read was—

2. *Travels in Siam.* By Sir R. H. SCHOMBURGK, COR. F.R.G.S.,
H.M.'s Consul at Bangkok.

SIR R. SCHOMBURGK left Bangkok in December, in company with two nephews of the King, who were students at the Baptist Missionaries' school in that place. He passed in barges up the Menam, which he describes as being on the whole a monotonous river. In three weeks' time he reached Rahaing, the most southern of the Lao states, which are presided over by petty princes tributary to Siam. Here the river was left on account of its being too low for further navigation, and the journey was pursued on the backs of elephants—a mode of conveyance of which Sir R. Schomburgk complains bitterly. Lahong, the battlemented capital of another Lao state, was reached in eleven days, after travelling along a mountainous road, "of a description that would have set a timid person into the most nervous state. The pathway up and down the high mountains has no greater breadth than from 5 to 6 feet, with ledges and shelves of rock resembling steps, and frequently a precipice on the right or the left. But the security with which that sagacious animal the elephant travels soon inspires confidence. He draws near to the ledge of the rock he has to descend, sounds its depth with his proboscis, and cautiously puts down one of his fore-feet, and, having acquired footing, the other follows; then the hind-legs are doubled, and he glides upon his haunches to the edge of the ledge, and the first hind-foot, then the next, is put down. If he were not to double up his hind-legs, the angle, when his fore-legs were at the bottom of the ledge, would be of that description that no person could keep on his back. As it is, one has to hold on with all force."

Three days more of a similar road brought the party to Lampoon, and one more, through fertile and highly-cultivated country, to Xiengmai, the largest of all the Laos cities, and about 3 miles in circumference. Sir R. Schomburgk states that there is a yearly export of 400,000*l.* worth of teak-wood from Xiengmai to Moulmein.